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## NOTES ON CURRENT AND RECENT EVENTS.<sup>1</sup>

*The New York Police Court Bill.* A bill designed to improve the administration of justice in police courts of the cities of New York, drawn by Justice Chas. F. MacLean, was recently introduced into the New York Legislature. The bill required an immediate hearing of all cases of persons arrested, the abolition of all police court records of persons discharged, and a simplification of the procedure of police courts.

*The Indeterminate Sentence in England.* The Prevention of Crimes Act in England, which went into effect August 1, last, in the judgment of many reformers, marks the beginning of a new era in the methods of dealing with habitual criminals. The act empowers the court in the case of offenders who have already been convicted three times, to impose an indeterminate sentence of from three to five years. Every such case is required to be brought at least once every twelve months before the Home Secretary, who is given the power to release the offender on probation.

*Laboratory Study of Criminals.* A laboratory for the study of criminals and defectives, according to the general plan advocated by Arthur MacDonald of Washington, has recently been established in Russia with a relation to the Russian Government somewhat similar to that which the Smithsonian Institution bears to the government of the United States. Seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars have been appropriated by the government for the establishment and maintenance of the laboratory. It will be remembered that several years ago Mr. MacDonald proposed the establishment of such a laboratory by the United States Government, the same to be under the jurisdiction of the Department of Justice. A vigorous propaganda in favor of the project was conducted by him, and it received the approval of many scientists and lawyers, but failed of passage. More recently he submitted his scheme to various European governments and its adoption by the Russian government is, we believe, the first fruits of his long and persistent efforts in the interest of the scientific study of the criminal classes.

*Children's Courts.* The excellent work being done by the Children's court of New York City is shown in the recent annual report of Mr. Ernest K. Coulter, Clerk of the Court. There were fewer commitments, we are told, during the past year than during the previous year and that there were only eighty-five more arraignments, notwithstanding the increase of population. Concerning the function of the court the report says:

"Its work in withdrawing thousands from the procession of paupers and criminals that press onward to almshouses and penal institutions, and making of them future good citizens, entitles the court to be regarded as one of the municipality's most valuable assets. Viewed merely in the cold light of dollars and cents the test of appraisement would be the civic difference in citizenship between preying parasites and profitable producers. The court, in dealing with the multitude of children that comes before it each year, views each as a prospective citizen, an individual potentiality for good or evil. The thought of individual salvation is ever uppermost in dealing with

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<sup>1</sup>Furnished by J. W. G.